

CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

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NOTICE

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PLANNING BOARD FOR EUROPEAN INLAND SURFACE TRANSPORT
(PBEIST)

CIVIL AVIATION PLANNING COMMITTEE
(CAPC)

EUROPEAN UNION TRANSPORT POLICY ISSUES

Note by the International Staff

Attached is a report provided by the Luxembourg Representative to PBEIST and CAPC on relevant transport issues having been dealt with during the Luxembourg's Presidency of the European Union in the second half year of 1997.

(Signed) L. Servais
M. Klingsheim

This document includes: 1 Annex

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NATO,
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GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG Luxembourg, 8th January 1998
GOVERNMENT
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Reference: rd/22348/97

Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of Transport Ministers,
second half of 1997

Results

1. **Council Meeting on 9th October 1997**
- 1.1. **Access by Central and East European countries (CEEC) to the community transport market**

A meeting of European Union Ministers with their colleagues from the 10 candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe focussed on negotiations regarding access to transport markets and the progressive adoption of Community patrimony by those countries.

- 1.2 **Access to the road transport operator's profession and mutual recognition of qualifications**

The Council approved a Directive continuing the process of harmonisation in access to the road transport operator's profession. It applies to road haulage contractors using vehicles of authorised maximum weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes; vehicles used for local short-haul transport with an authorised maximum weight between 3.5 and 6 tonnes are exempt.

The Directive introduces:

- stricter requirements regarding good repute;
- an increase in the amounts that the undertaking must have available in order to meet the condition of financial standing; it must have capital and reserves to a value of at least 9000 ecus for a single vehicle and 5000 ecus for each additional vehicle;

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- a more detailed examination procedure and the introduction of a harmonised minimum level of knowledge required;
- a requirement for undertakings to undergo regular inspections at least every five years to check whether they still meet the conditions of good repute, financial standing and professional competence.

1.3 Funding of Trans-European Transport Networks [TTN] - Public-Private Partnership [PPP]

The Council approved submissions in which it acknowledged that the creation and development of public-private partnerships was important in speeding up the implementation of some TTN projects, insofar as they attracted additional funding and increased the financial viability of these projects by combining public and private sector skills.

2. Council meeting on 10th and 11th December 1997

2.1. Shipping

Monitoring of ships by the port State

The Council decided to strengthen the Directive currently in force on checking by the port State authorities of ships calling at EU ports. The revised Directive provides that each member-State shall undertake to inspect a certain percentage of the ships entering port to check whether those ships are observing European and international standards regarding safety, prevention of pollution and social law.

Negotiations with India and China

The Council has briefed the Commission to negotiate shipping agreements with China and India, the aim of these agreements being to ensure freedom to provide shipping services and free access to ports. These are the first negotiating briefs for the shipping sector in the history of the Community.

2.2. Air transport

"Open skies" negotiations with the United States

During Council the Commission submitted to Ministers a reinforced draft brief authorising the Commission to initiate formal substantive negotiations with the United States with the aim of creating a "common air zone" covering the entire airspace of the EU and the United States.

In view of the Council's refusal to agree to such a negotiating brief, the Commission stated that it would reactivate the infringement procedures that it had already initiated in 1996 against 8 member-States which had already concluded and signed bilateral "open skies" agreements with the United States: Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium and Denmark.

The Commission took the view that the member-States in question had broken Community law by concluding bilateral "open skies" agreements with the United States, because those agreements gave the concluding States advantages, to the detriment of the interests of other member-States and their airlines.

Air traffic safety and control

Ministers considered the status of work on the decision recommendation authorising the Commission to undertake negotiations with a view to creating a competent European civil aviation safety organisation: they stated their preference for a form of international organisation extending beyond the framework of the Community.

Overflights of Siberia

The Fifteen asked the Russian government to put an end to the compensation payments that European airlines have to make to the Russian authorities for overflying Siberia, and to replace them by an equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory system of taxation in accordance with international law.

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2.3. Navigation by satellite affecting all modes of transport

Agreement between the European Community, the European Space Agency and Eurocontrol on a European contribution to installing a global navigation satellite system [GNSS]

The American GPS [Global Positioning System] and GLONASS [Global Navigation Satellite System], its Russian counterpart, are insufficient to meet all civil user requirements; they are military systems, made available to civilians, with certain restrictions.

The GPS consists of 24 orbiting satellites; in the case of GLONASS the coverage is incomplete. It should be noted that the GPS is a free service, but there is no guarantee of availability for civilian users.

Installation of the GNSS [Global Navigation Satellite System] is scheduled, to make up for the weaknesses of the military systems and provide a better response to civilian users' needs: installation will be in two stages, GNSS 1 and GNSS 2.

The basis approach of GNSS 1 is to supplement the GPS and GLONASS systems relatively quickly, to produce a satellite navigation system usable for most civilian applications; this is EGNOS, the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System.

The principal idea of GNSS 2 is to use the time made available by the transition via GNSS 1 to design a civilian satellite navigation system to dispense with the GPS and GLONASS systems.

The development of GNSS 1 involves the proper installation of transponders for INMARSAT III [International Mobile Satellite Organisation] geostationary satellites and bringing into service monitoring stations and ground-based processing centres. The European Space Agency [ESA], which has developed the INMARSAT satellites, regards installation of navigation equipment on board these satellites as the first step [GNSS 1] towards GNSS 2.

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Development of the satellite navigation and positioning system will improve the operation of modes of transport in Europe substantially, by providing better traffic flow management, increased profitability and less congestion in the infrastructure.

On 11th December 1997 the Council of Transport Ministers approved an agreement between the European Community, the European Space Agency and Eurocontrol for a European contribution to the establishment of a global satellite navigation system.

The European Parliament will also be consulted on this subject.

The agreement will help to protect European interests and will facilitate the effective mobilisation of satellite technology potential for navigation; it will assist the negotiation of international agreements aimed at ensuring interoperability of regional contributions to a worldwide system.

Promotion of a navigation and positioning system in Europe is a central element of community policy aiming at complete integration of land, sea and air transport infrastructures with a view to improving safety in transport and long-term mobility of persons and goods.

2.4. Road transport

Eurovignette

The Luxembourg Presidency had prepared a new draft compromise with a view to arriving at a common position for the Fifteen, since unanimity was required on a new directive regarding the Eurovignette, intended as a replacement for the directive cancelled by the European Court of Justice.

No agreement could be reached by Ministers because of differences, particularly on the linking of taxation for crossing the Brenner imposed by Austria and the rates as a whole.

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Negotiations with Switzerland on lorry crossings

The Council has briefed the Commission to continue negotiations with Switzerland based on the principle of a direct link between the level of the planned Swiss road tax and actual infrastructure costs; moreover, the level of that tax should be comparable with the tolls applicable to crossing the Brenner.

Social harmonisation in road transport

Ministers had a policy debate on the Commission Livre Blanc on sectors excluded from the directive on working hours, in this case the transport sector. The gave a favourable reception to the Commission's intention to submit a proposal in the near future aimed at amending the regulations on drivers' time at the wheel and rest periods with a view to incorporating new provisions on a ceiling on the number of hours at the wheel and loading/unloading.

2.5. Road traffic

Harmonisation of registration documents for motor vehicles

The Council approved a directive aimed at harmonising the form and content of motor vehicle registration documents, to facilitate road traffic within the Community, to increase road safety and improve the operation of the internal market.